

John Ferris Riker journal S1117

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Rare Books and Manuscripts
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Summary Information

Repository	Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	Riker, John Ferris
Title	John Ferris Riker journal
Date	1852
Extent	0.01 Cubic feet 1 folder
Language	English
Text [Folder]	S1117

Preferred Citation

John Ferris Riker journal, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Indiana State Library

Biographical Note

John Ferris Riker was born in Hamilton County, Ohio, on October 1, 1828. On April 5, 1852, John and his two friends, Aaron D. Riker and David Ellison Lichliter left home and went to Cincinnati to join 15 other men going to the California Gold Rush. In 1854, John married Eliza Ann Lichliter. John died April 7, 1909, at Saint Paris, Champaign County, Ohio.

Aaron Riker was born July 19, 1830, to William and Rachel (Ferris) Riker, in Hamilton County, Ohio. He married Catherine W. Riker, and had Willie, Orie Mary, and Estella Louise. Aaron died on July 25, 1914, and is buried in Spring Grove Cemetery, Cincinnati.

David Lichliter was born in Virginia in 1830. On May 5, 1859, he married Eliza Jane Buxton in Piqua, Miami County, Ohio. In 1883, David married Sara Slauson. David died on April 1, 1905, in Piqua, Ohio.

Scope and Contents

This is a typed transcript of John Ferris Riker's 1852 journal about his overland trip from Cincinnati to California to participate in the Gold Rush. A copy of the publication, which is 62 pages, is located at the Beinecke Library, Yale University.

On the day of their departure, April 5, 1852, John Riker was 23 years old. His relative Aaron Riker was 22 years old, and his friend David Lichliter was 21 or 22. On page 3, John lists the three messes with six men in each. In the second mess are four men from Champaign County, Ohio, which includes John and Aaron Riker, David Lichliter, and James M. Wyant. Mr. Wyant was "quite unwell" on April 6. On the 8th, their horses stampeded. At the junction of the Fort Leavenworth and St. Joseph roads, hundreds of teams were in sight. On April 19, they reached Fort Kearney, where 60 soldiers served.

John wrote about rain storms, river crossings, a hailstorm, Indians, dust and sand. They reached Fort Bridger on June 16. On June 23, they arrived at Salt Lake City, which he described on pages 31-33. He wrote about the valley and the Salt Lake from pages 33-35. They had their last view of Salt Lake on July 1. On July 25, the company split, with John and his two friends taking Johnson's Cut-off. He arrived in Sacramento on July 31.

On pages 53 and 54, John gave advice on the best teams and outfits to use in going to California. On pages 55-61, he tells John Sinclair's personal account of the Donner-Reed Party, which was stranded in the Sierra Nevada mountains during the winter of 1847. The final page is a summary of the distances traveled, by land and water, with the total of 3,297 miles..

Arrangement

This collection is arranged by subject.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Rare Books and Manuscripts

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Legal title, copyright, and literary rights reside with Rare Books and Manuscripts, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, IN. All requests to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted to Rare Books and Manuscripts.

Custodial History

This collection was received by Rare Books and Manuscripts as a donation from Ben H. Riker in 1936/12.

Accruals

No further additions are expected.

Processing Information

Collection processing and finding aid completed 2014/10/30 by Nikki Stoddard Schofield.

Controlled Access Headings

Geographic Name(s)

- California
- Cincinnati (Ohio)

Subject(s)

- California Gold Rush, 1848-1852
- Diaries
- Weather